

Does boxing have a future?

The catastrophic brain injury suffered by British boxer Paul Ingle in September 2000 was the latest high profile case to highlight the dangers of his sport; boxing.

Boxing has a long and proud tradition and history in Britain and the world over. But the future of boxing has once again been thrown open to debate as a result of his fight, which has fuelled the fires of opposition.

Over the decades (as well as throughout history), boxing has suffered several black eyes but has got up off the canvas to survive. Much to the dismay of one of its main detractors, the British Medical Association, (BMA), who lead the campaign to ban the historical endeavour in Great Britain.

Though pressure has mounted on the sport it has survived thus far, and to the delight to its many advocates.

For supporters of boxing, the sport is about bravery and determination in the face of extreme physical danger. 'Boxing is seen as the noble art, the epitome of man's instinct to fight, a way of teaching self-discipline.' (Gardiner et al 1998).

This kind of view tends to represent those involved in the sport. When challenged about the safety of boxing, supporter normally counter punch with the fact that boxing is safe when compared to other sports such as rock-climbing and motor racing, which are more dangerous and produce higher numbers of accidents, injuries and fatalities.

Detractors of boxing would argue that a civilised society should not tolerate the organised brutality which boxing is, however 'brave and heroic it may appear.' (Gardiner et al 1998).

Boxing the "theatre with blood", as described so by one of it's own, promoter Frank Warren, (Panorama 1995- Boxing-debate), has raised and currently holds a curious position in British law. The legal authorities suggest that it is only 'sparring' that is lawful, but actual 'boxing' has no specific legal precedents and seems to be treated as an anomaly.

Instigated by deaths and injuries in the ring the legality and legitimacy of boxing has continuously been debated. There have been attempts initiated but to no avail to have boxing banned on the ground of its legality. A number of private members bills has been presented and rejected by Parliament.

Boxing has tried to keep its house in order under the current climate it operates in and has made numerous internal changes in an attempt to increase safety. Examples of this can be seen with the introduction of head-guards in amateur boxing and also the significant change made in professional boxing when the number of rounds was reduced to 12 from 15 as a result of the death of Duk Koo Kim, a South Korean fighter who died in a bout

which saw him knocked out in the 14th round and never regain consciousness. (Source Gardiner et al 1998). Just a couple of ‘civilised’ measures.

The British ring has seen its share of deaths and critical injuries too. The deaths of Bradley Stone, Steve Watts and James Murry coupled together with the serious life changing injuries sustained by Michael Watson and Gerald McClland and recently Paul Ingle has led to the periodic question and opinion about whether boxing can be justified and whether it has a future within contemporary society?

The emerging popularity of boxing amongst women is an area that is providing much concern for the British Medical Association. As a means of health and fitness many women are embarking upon the ancient art. There argument is the same for women as it is for men.

This paper aims to identify the history and development of the sport and explores links with social class. The legality of boxing will be explored and also identified will be the interest groups surrounding boxing. It attempts to explore issues resulting from the potential prohibition of boxing. Issues discussed through out this paper will attempt to present arguments for and against the banning of boxing. Does boxing have a future?

The history of the sport of boxing has been well documented in modern literature as well as its developments and growth.

An understanding of the diverse social and authoritative influences in operation during the development of boxing is needed to appreciate the nature of the sport form today. Sugden 1996 considers how the sport of boxing is ingrained in society, “Alongside running, boxing is the most ancient of all sports.” Sugden identifies how deep rooted the sport is in society.

Fighting with fists was a sport first recognised about 6000 years back in what is now recognised as Ethiopia, this is evident in cave paintings, which have been uncovered. From there it is thought to have spread to ancient Egypt and eventually throughout the Mediterranean area. Ancient Crete also had a boxing-like sport, which developed independently about 1500BC. (Secondsout.com/).

Although the sport wasn’t added to the ancient Olympic programme until 688BC (Brooke-Ball 2000), some sort of boxing had become pretty well established among the Greeks before that time. An early form of Greek boxing would see two adversaries sat on stones facing and then pounding away at one another until one was knocked out. Olympic boxing wasn’t thought to be so brutal, but there were no breaks in the action. Fighters would wear leather thongs, originally to protect their hands and wrists.

As things progressed harder leather was used, turning this thong into a weapon. During the latter days of the ancient Olympics, Romans and other foreigners were allowed to take part, and so boxing was taken to Rome. The form of boxing was altered when the

Romans added iron studs to these soft wrappings (mufflers), making them potentially deadly weapons.

To satisfy the notorious lust for blood, they went further developing, 'a cruel, spur like instrument of bronze called the 'myrmex''. (Secondsout.com/). There were no rules in this 'gladiatorial boxing' and the sport degenerated into bloody combat. The result of these bouts would be certain death for the loser. The boxing skills which are recognised today, and which the Greeks may have developed before they were over run (Source Brooke-Ball 2000), were never given a chance to evolve by the Romans. This sordid weapon along with boxing itself was finally abandoned and abolished when the Roman Empire fell in the fifth century AD. Consequently the sport of boxing fell with the Empire.

The most notable contribution the Romans brought to the sport was the ring, originally a simple drawn out circle. (Secondsout.com/).

Until the British resurrected the sport in the early eighteenth century, boxing had remained dormant since the Romans fall. Needless to say that fisticuffs were displayed after alcoholic inducement and for pride, but not for entertainment, and not according to any recognised set of rules.

With the spread of Christianity, boxing and pugilism in any variety evidently disappeared from Europe completely. As mentioned, boxing resurfaced in England in the late seventeenth, early eighteenth century. "A London newspaper referred to a bout in 1681, and the Royal Theatre in London was the scene of regular scheduled matches in 1698." (Secondsout.com/story_6382.asp.)

The history of boxing has transcended periods of colonial, dictatorial and political rule across various cultures and societies, therefore the specific characteristics associated with the attitudes of the adoptive groups at such times were reflected on the brutality of contests. Gorn in Sugden 1996 identifies the affect of the eighteenth century England on the fate of pugilism at the time, "the bloodiness in the ring and the pit paralleled the bloodlines of society at the time."

The sport at that time was a mixture of wrestling and boxing and anything went. Anything!

An Oxfordshire born Englishman has been credited with the popular rebirth of boxing. James Figg opened a boxing academy in London 1719 effectively heralding its rejuvenation after its many years absence and introduced a measure of skill to the sport. "Figg was better known as a cudgel-fighter and swordsman but he nevertheless claimed to be the first boxing champion in his amphitheatre." (Brooke-ball 2000).

Figg attracted the attention of the English gentry and won great publicity for his academy by challenging all comers to bouts. It is said he never lost and was considered champion till his retirement. His success inspired the development of other boxing academies in

London. The fact that he was also a fencers, gave boxing some prestige. A number of gentlemen amateurs took up boxing as a past time. (Mason 1987).

Jack Broughton one of Figg's pupils who was generally acknowledged as champion from Figg's retirement to 1750, taught boxing and operated an arena in London. Broughton immediately started to revolutionize the art of boxing and is accredited with drawing up the first formal rules for the sport.

Fighting had always been callous and dirty but Broughton's rules were set to change that. Before Broughton's changes there was virtually no code of conduct so to speak and fighters were consequently allowed to use any tactic they desired. "It was not unheard of for a man to have his eyes gouged out or be kicked while down and in those days fighter wore spiked boots." (Brooke-Ball 2000).

As well as being the first formal rule maker Broughton has also been credited with inventing the first boxing gloves, which were known as muffers. These were to be used to protect hands and faces from blows in practices and only practice fights.

The rules devised by Broughton were used throughout England with only minor modifications until 1838, when the Pugilistic Society developed the London Prize Ring Rules. They also developed the now familiar squared ring enclosed with ropes.

The passage of the development of boxing in England from the eighteenth century to modern day is directly reflected on the status of the sport form in contemporary society. The middle classes (notably Figg and Broughton) elimination of pugilism during this era of time moulded the way by which gentlemen fought. A rejuvenated and more socially tolerable form of the sport was required if it was to regain the support of the abolitionists and to replace the vulgarity and rowdiness both associated with prize-fights and pugilism.

Following further developments the establishment of a codified version of boxing appeared in 1866 representing the attitudes at that period in time and also in the current climate. They were known as the 'Marquess of Queensbury rules.'

"The Marquess of Queensbury rules, which to this day still govern both amateur and professional boxing with only relatively minor alterations. (Shipley cited in Sugden 1996, 26)

The renewed middle class enthusiasm for the new codified sport form had provided the necessary fuel for the 'Muscular Christianity' ethos of the latter nineteenth century Britain. It was around this time that boxing though was some what hi-jacked by the working classes as it was seen as a relief from the working conditions of the time and an alternative to bare knuckled bouts and other expressions of violence.

Boxings popularity rose steadily among the working classes and it "became a popular spectator sport when unskilled and casual workers became able to afford sixpence regularly each week for extra entertainment." (Mason 1989 p91).

Since the working classes adoption of boxing, the sport has since been labelled as a lower class participation sport.

The recognition of a high participation in the sport by those originating from lower socio-economic groups is documented in previous work by Oates 1987, Rodda 1996, Scannel 1997 and Sugden 1985. This trend is recognised globally when looking at participation patterns of the sport.

“A survey of amateur and professional boxers is one of the quickest ways to discovering which groups are the poorest of the poor in the modern industrial world.” (Sugden 85).

In Scannel 1997, the idea that economic necessity serves to lure young amateur fighters as well as retaining many professional boxers in the game is developed.

Boxing is the habitat in which males reside is fact researched by Sugden 1985 and observed by Scannel 1997. It is documented as providing a breeding ground that produces males conditioned for participation in boxing.

Sugden 1996, considers that the boxing sub-culture is sustained by a mixture of aggressive masculinity, generated by lower working class communities and the capacity of boxing to provide a positively sanctioned channel for this trait and the impression that sport can offer temporary or even sanctuary from urban poverty and related problems.

This tends to put the case forward representing boxing as an opportunity of self-advancement. The sport traditionally attracts boys from poorer backgrounds and gives them an opportunity to work their way out of poverty. The most successful professional boxers may even set themselves up financially for life through boxing. Conversely it has been suggested that attracting people from poorer backgrounds means that they are exploited by being encouraged to be involved in a dangerous sport for the amusement of others. Michener 1976 described boxing as a sporting endeavour, which he considers, is a traditional avenue of escalation for under privileged Englishmen without an education. Consequently therefore he is suggesting that the sport can be socially elevating for participants, he explains that no boxer fights because they want to, that historically boxers see the sport as ‘a way out’ of their current situation. Though this maybe argued against when you consider the participation of amateur fighters.

Rodda 1996, considered that lower socio-economical groups are somewhat hindered in routes to other sports. That blocked paths into these other sports lead people in to boxing, but without restriction children would rather engage in sports such as tennis or golf.

Oates 1987 concurs with this viewpoint and suggests that boxing remains, “the only major sport accessible to what are piously called the underprivileged.”

Boxing is subject to Elias’s civilising process and the increased safety provision in recent

years maybe an extension of a continuing regulatory approach to boxing that has been occurring since the mid-nineteenth century when prize-fighting/pugilism with its winner takes all mentality was a popular sport.

Today the violence of boxing has been somewhat controlled, regulated and contained.

Like foxhunting another 'sport' that has today many opponents, prize-fighting "can be said to have gone through a 'sportisation' process which has metamorphosed into boxing." (paraphrased Gardiner et al 1998 p113).

It can be said that today's sport of boxing has become more civilised as a result of a number of relating factors. The setting of a formal set of written rules has seen the sport move away from its bloody past and has been tightly regulated. Resulting from those rules penalties can now be imposed when these rules are broken. Attempts have also been made to equalise the conditions for all boxers with the introduction of weight divisions, a factor disregarded in times past. This move has seen skill and procession as being effective on results rather than size and reach.

One of the most notable civilised instructions on boxing has been the time restrictions placed on the length of bouts. Today three minutes per round is the norm and the maximum rounds anyone can fight is twelve rounds. In contrast before the 1860's a round would be ended with a fall. The largest number of rounds to be fought under the concept was the 276 rounds contested by Jack Jones and Patsy Tunney in 1825 in Cheshire. (Gardiner et al 1998 p114).

The need for protection of hands and wrist was first recognised and considered by Jack Broughton when he developed the muffers-gloves. But since to present day a whole manner of protective equipment has been introduced to protect fighters. Gum shields, groin and kidney protectors, padded gloves, and headguards. Though these moves have civilised boxing extensively, the British Medical Association and other opponents consider in todays society boxing is uncivilised and holds no place, regardless of protection.

Brain Key the chairman of the Society for Nursing People with learning disabilities claims boxing gloves, "aids in the infliction of considerable damage." (Hall 96).

He considers that it is really unacceptable in a modern civilised society to promote and idolise one individual for his ability to perpetrate a violent assault upon his fellow. (Hall 96).

"Boxing is safe when conducted in a controlled environment where proper safety standard have been laid down by the governing body and which are strictly adhered to." (English Sports Council- Now, Sport England).

Not a claim with which Dr Vivianne Natherson of the BMA would agree with she says, “There is no safe level of boxing. Any blow to the head is harmful.” (<http://newb.thdo.bbc.co.uk/sport> 18-12-00).

In 1982 prompted over concerns of ‘dementia pugilistica’ and accumulating ring fatalities, the BMA, which then represented 80% and now 84% of the United Kingdoms doctors made a stand and called for the noble art to be put to bed, they called for the abolition of boxing in all forms.

The BMA has repeatedly called for the sport to be banned arguing that any attempt to improve the safety measures at boxing matches as a waste of time. They accompany this argument with the claims of medical evidence relating to injuries of the brain, head, eye, nose, ear, breast and neck. They strongly refute and oppose the claim by what is now Sport England formerly the English Sports Council that the sport is in anyway safe.

In there arguments the BMA points out it is the only sport where the intention is to inflict serious injury on your opponent and they feel as a result it must be banned. “Boxing is a unique sport that victory can be obtained by inflicting such physical injury on an opponent the he/she is unable to continue.” (BMA Document 93).

Despite their calls little has actually been done. The political position of the United Kingdoms main parties has been to publically declare their allegiance to boxing. Richard Spring in 1999, when Shadow Sports Minister for the Conservative Party, said, “boxing in schools is a form of exercise which enable people to channel their aggression.” (Nelson 99).

The Labour Party has also given the sport it’s backing. Current Health Secretary Alan Millburn has stated the government has “no thoughts of banning boxing.”

Tony Banks, when as Sports Minister in 1999, issued a comprehensive statement of support on behalf of the Labour government. “We remain firmly committed to the encouragement of boxing as a sport.” (Nelson 99).

This contemporary information highlights the position the current state of boxing politically and shows the BMA has little official backing. Though there are some exceptions. There are naturally MP’s who reject boxing on ground of morality and legality.

There are many benefits that herald from boxing and participation in the noble sport form. One benefit may be considered that boxing induces a fit and healthy society. The training undertaken by boxing participants increases their general level of fitness and health. Training for boxing also openly discourages drinking, smoking and drug taking. Fit and healthy people are conducive to a healthy society and such an objective is surely in the public interest. However, boxing is openly accepted as being a dangerous sport, it is quite clear that there are safer ways of ensuring a fit population.

Another benefit identified with being involved in boxing is that the training and development needed for boxing is considered to be conducive to the instilling of discipline in fighters.

The training necessary to be a boxer is carried out in a disciplined manner and when combined with the ethos of boxing it tends to instill self-discipline. Many boxers claim that they would have lead lives of crime without the self-discipline instilled in them by boxing.

Colin MacMillan the secretary of the Professional Boxers Association, said that, “boxing is a great character builder, it instills discipline respect, inner motivation there are so many positive sides which outweigh the negative sides.”
(<http://news6.thdo.bbb.co.uk/sport> 18-12-00).

It is often cited that boxing is a means of social control. Rodda 1996, reveals that boxing has positive influences on it's participants. Jarvie 1991, identifies a correlation between social control and sports participation.

As previously referred, boxing offers fantastic opportunities for self-advancement, traditionally attracting participants from the lower socio-economic backgrounds it opens up many new possibilities for successful participants. The route from poverty is a key motivating factor.

Cashmore 1996, has viewed the historical participation of sport in Britain as a culture where participation is/was dominated by white people, however, he sees the participation in boxing as the breaking of (the) ice for the participation of the black and other ethnic minority males in sport.

The benefits boxing has upon society with its ability to unite all is useful tool in knocking down barriers minorities may face. Boxing is an excellent vehicle to encourage the presence of black and other ethnic minority sporting role models, which motivates further black and ethnic athletes in participation in the sport.

The downside to boxing can be assessed when you learn of the horrific injuries and fatalities that occur. Boxing is dangerous. In any given boxing match acute injuries may occur and a boxer may suffer chronic injuries as resulting of his boxing career. There is a significant number of deaths consequent upon boxing bouts.

Amongst acute injuries the eye is a frequent victim. The most common eye injury is the detachment of the retina. Recently it has been pointed out that although, “few of the injuries give rise to symptoms of immediate visual loss, in a sample of active professional boxers, 50% had at least one sight threatening injury to the angle, lens or retina.”

Whilst these acute injuries are in themselves sufficient to give rise to considerable concern about the public interest served by allowing boxing, greater significance is the chronic injury of brain damage.

Whilst boxing accounts for fewer deaths than many other sports, the BMA says this is insignificant when compared with the effects of brain damage that goes unrecorded in many boxers.

Cuts and bruises are the most common injuries seen and for many boxers repair work in terms of stitches and dental work is accepted as an inevitability.

Blows to the body can leave the boxer with both broken ribs and internal injuries and bleeding, but one area which is a cause for most concern, is the head. Brain tissue, once damaged remains damaged.

Dr Natherson of the BMA claims that, "Every time someone is hit in the head they get a minor degree of brain injury, that becomes cumulative and we can't repair the damage to the brain." (<http://news6.thdo.bbc.co.uk/sport> 13-12-00).

Brain damage occurs in one of two ways, 'catastrophically' meaning it follows an injury sustained in a single bout. Or 'gradually', meaning the brain damage builds up as a result of repeated blows to the head.

Another argument against boxing is that violence leads to violence. The argument that violence begets violence is two fold. First boxing encourages the use of violence in other circumstances. Secondly, it presents a poor image to children and others. Coverage by the media of the excitement on seeing boxers fighting cutting are another, knocking each other down and ending a fight exhausted is viewed as being repulsive and unacceptable. (Social learning effects evident in Bandura's work, will lead to children doing what they see and believing it's all right regardless.)

Those against boxing often argue that boxing encourages high level gambling and therefore is not acceptable. Though this argument is irrelevant. Whilst the evils of gambling can be significant it is not a real argument considering that there are many other sports that encourage gambling too.

Michael Hayward, a coronary care nurse from Portsmouth says, "Two people knocking seven bells out of each other is not conducive to good health however it is there health and their bodies. Few deaths occurred compared to rugby, paragliding diving and motor racing." (Hall 96).

In the period from 1986 to 1992 boxing accounted for three deaths in England and Wales, compared with 77 deaths from motor sports 69 for air sports, 34 from mountaineering, 40 from ball games and 28 from horse riding. (Dr Warburton cited in news6.thdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/English/uk.news/03-05-98).

Simon Black, General secretary of the British Board of Control believes boxing is always unfairly criticised compared to other sports. "I didn't hear much from the BMA when five people died three day eventing. That is very dangerous." (<http://www.news6.thdo.bbc.co.uk/sports/hi/englishother.sport/news/03-05-98>).

Though sports other than boxing, which have relatively higher numbers of accidents and fatalities are not subject to the same type of debate as boxing.

Enthusiasts and militant supporters of boxing are usually heard reciting the above figures and asserting that boxing is less dangerous than such sports and pastimes including motor sports and horse racing.

However though, boxing has three principal differentiating features from the other sports and the first of which is, it is the goal of the boxer to rain blows on to his opponent, a prerequisite of winning any boxing match. Secondly there 'is' evidence as discussed, that boxing can cause chronic and accumulative injuries.

Deaths and injuries result from unforeseen circumstances in other sports mentioned. Boxing is actively inflicting damage on an opponent. (which happens to be intentional). There is greater risk of injury in boxing than any other sport, and whilst there are fewer fatalities than in some other sports, there are nevertheless a significant number of fatalities and further, it is only within boxing that there is high incidences of chronic rather than acute serious injury; brain damage.

The third and final differentiating feature; since most other dangerous sports involve a person on their own, motor racing drivers, jockeys, parachutists, there are no legal sanction against such activity. "The bottom line is that the aim in professional boxing is to inflict brain damage on your opponent. Since that is the case nobody should be surprised when tragedies occur." (O'Neil 95, Telegraph).

Parliament has never declared the sport of boxing illegal and as present in the United Kingdom no court has ever decided a case involving the legality of boxing. For sometime the BMA has campaigned for stricter legal regulation of boxing and have declared it's intentions to have boxing outlawed. It has sponsored legislation in the past in Parliament to try and get the sport abolished but to no avail.

Boxing in terms of its legality remains something of an anomaly. All rules concerning assault and so forth are suspended when the boxers step into the ring. "The deliberate or reckless infliction of an injury normally has two legal consequences, the aggressor has committed a criminal offence and the victim can sue for compensation." (Branye et al 98). –'Normally' because the law has always made room for exceptions one in surgery and another boxing. The boxer when he steps into the ring has consented and knows the risks involved. According to Branye 98 an assault can be legal because of consent.

Boxing like contact sports share the fact that it has specific sets of rules. Contact as well as injury, which are within the rules, are deemed consensual. However, the biting of an opponents ear for example, a la Mike Tyson is not within the rules is assault, as it was not consented. Punching though is.

Boxing is different to other contact sports in so much the fact that in rugby for example, it is not intended to cause injury (some may argue), by contrast boxers are not breaking any rules when they try to cause temporary injury

How easy would it be to ban boxing? The answer is quite difficult. "It is accepted as fact that boxing is legal." (Brayne et al 98). In his paper, 'Could boxing be banned' which examined the case law surrounding boxing he could find no precedent which could permit such a move. He confirms that the courts have never been asked to consider cases before them that actually involved the legality of boxing.

"The legality of organised fighting has been found on public policy." (Brayne et al 98).

The only possible route legally that Brayne considered in the quest for abolition of boxing was the suggestion of the withdrawal of medical support from bouts, that would make it illegal because of the regulation requiring doctors at the ringside and emergency services on standby.

According to Brayne 98, "The withdrawal of medical cover would, without legislation, make professional boxing impossible." But doctors and any such move would be deemed impossible and impractical.

There are precedents in terms that professional boxing has been illegal in Sweden since 1970 and since 1981 in Norway. But that is of no concern to British boxing. For sometime, the BMA has campaigned against boxing, and two Bills that have managed to be presented to Parliament to outlaw boxing for rewards have both have been defeated. Parliament has never declared boxing illegal and no court has ever decided the legality of boxing.

Recently Labour MP Paul Flynn has called for a Bill, to ban blows to the head, and also a change in the law regarding assault laws and boxing. He wants boxers to be charged with assault or manslaughter if their opponents are critically injured or killed. He claims, "at present if boxers kill or seriously maim their opponent in the ring they cannot be charged with assault or manslaughter because they have a defence, that they were acting within the rules of the sport. My Bill will remove that defence."

(<http://newb.thdo.bbc.co.uk/sport/hi/english/other> 18-12-00).

Such a move would see serious repercussions for the sport. It would make many potential fighters think twice about entering the sport. It would doubtlessly severely change the sport beyond recognition.

If such moves were to get the go ahead or even still if boxing were to be banned, it is inevitable that it would be pushed underground, which would be incredibly dangerous, difficult to administer, and would increase risking even more injury to fighters in a unregulated territory. The danger is if boxing has no choice but to go underground then the potential for even more catastrophic injuries are high.

Barry McGuigan 1995 (Panorama- Boxing debate), states a ban, “wouldn’t stop boxing, unlicensed boxing would flourish, the venues would vary from seedy drinking halls to out of town warehouses, the win at all cost syndrome would permeate a sport that is at the moment is subject to strict control and supervision, it would be catastrophic. Would the BMA be prepared to shoulder the blame, I don’t believe they will.”

As western society is becoming ever more so civilised attempts have been made to abolish anything precluding violence or bad taste. The current situation regarding fox hunting is an example of this. Though boxing differs from fox hunting as boxers voluntarily enter the sport out of their own choice, unlike the fox, which has no choice. It seems it is generally only the medical establishment who are obsessed with boxing and having it outlawed

Their objections fall flat when they wholly explain their aversion on the basis of risk to health. As discussed a wide variety of ‘high risk’ activities including the contact sports as well as the dangerous sports such as motor racing and often horse racing, and aerial activities which are approved of, participated in and are arguably encouraged by the medical profession. As the figures suggest many more people die and suffer injury as a result of these such activities than they do by boxing.

Boxing is an extremely popular sporting pastime and attracts vast audiences. It is a great avenue to find self-discipline. The benefit do seem to outweigh the dangers, and that is why it is perhaps still in existence.

The medical professions obsession with boxing and its campaign for its abolition may be more deep-rooted than at first thought. An obvious answer, if taboo, is that the campaign against boxing is to do with class sensibilities. As considered, the modern form of boxing has remained a predominately working class, lower socio-economic persons pursuit though it is perceived by a predominately middle class profession as somehow brutal, vulgar, and unnecessary, while so many other ‘dangerous’ activities are regarded as food for the soul.

The debate about the legitimacy of boxing may have faced a brick wall currently, but the fight continues on moral grounds and on the grounds that in opponents eyes there is no place for a brutal sport in this day and age. Though defeated it will not remain uncontested in the future all it needs is a test case.

It appears boxing does have a future even though it will face continuous periodical scrutiny from the opposition medical quarters. It seems that only a massive swing of public opinion against boxing will set in motion the moves which would consign it to the history books forever. The fears that boxing would be more dangerous if forced to go underground resulting in a ban is a factor maybe keeping it afloat. Unfortunately attempts will be further strengthen if and when the next tragedy occurs. Statistically boxing is safe. Anti-boxing protestors should consider the fact that boxers choose voluntarily to take part in the dangers of the sport. Unless people have this right taken away will any attempts be successful.

Though boxing does seem to have a relatively safe future, an injury to a star name may set the balls in motion that may sway opinion. It is not out of the question that boxing will be changed in some respect, rule changes, such as fewer rounds, lighter gloves, and no punch zones including the head may be compromising concessions of the boxing authorities.

Boxing has always and will always have its detractors, though the future of the noble art remains safe for the foreseeable future.

Bibliography

- Beashel, P. & Taylor, J. (1996) Physical Education and Sport
Nelson, Spain
- Birley, D. (1995) Land of Sport and glory
Redwood books, Great Britain
- ‘Boxing Packs a Punch.’ British Medical Association, Publication.
- Brooke-Ball, P.(2000) Boxing. An Illustrated History of the Fight Game
Hermes House, Singapore
- Cashmore, E. (1992) Making Sense of Sport
2nd Edition Routledge, Great Britain
- Dunning, E. (1999) Sport matters
Routledge, Great Britain
- Gardiner, S. (1998) Sports law
Cavendish Publishing Limited, Great Britain
- Glyptis, S. (1989) Leisure and Unemployment
Open University Press, Great Britain
- Jarvie, G. (1991) Sport, Racism and Ethnicity
Falmer Press, Great Britain
- Just give her a ring’ Jan 2001 vol 9 Observer Sports Monthly supplement.
- Mason, T.(1989) Sport In Britain. A social history
Cambridge Press, Great Britain
- Nelson, N. Fury over boxing in schools 23-05-99, The People Newspaper.
- Oates, J. (1987) On Boxing
Dolphin, New York, USA
- O’Neil, S. (1995) New calls for ban after knocked-out boxer dies
The Telegraph, 16th October 1995
- Rodda, J. (1996) A Bloody Art, The state of boxing Video, found in Mountbatten Library

Panorama (1995) Should Boxing Be Banned-Debate Video, found in Mountbatten Library.

Scannel, V. (1987) Boxing
Brown and Benchmark, Great Britain

Sugden, J. (1987) The exploitation of disadvantage: The occupational sub culture of the boxer Manchester University Press, Great Britain

Sugden, J. (1996) Boxing and Society
Manchester University Press, Great Britain

Wesson, K. et al (1998) Sport and PE
Hodder & Stoughton, Great Britain

Internet:

BMA renews call for boxing ban 03-05-98 available from
[Http://news.thdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/uk/newsid_87000/87267.stm](http://news.thdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/uk/newsid_87000/87267.stm) (accessed 03-05-01)

Boxing: The health risks 24-09-99 available from
[Http://newsthdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/health/medical_notes/newsid_363000/363957.stm](http://newsthdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/health/medical_notes/newsid_363000/363957.stm)
((accessed 03-05-01).

Boxing on the ropes 18-12-00 available from
[Http://news6.thdo.bbc.co.uk/sport/hi/english/other_sports/newsid_1076000/1076244.stm](http://news6.thdo.bbc.co.uk/sport/hi/english/other_sports/newsid_1076000/1076244.stm)
(accessed 03-05-01)

Could boxing be banned? Brayne, H et al 13-06-98 available from
[Http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/316/7147/1813?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits&..](http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/316/7147/1813?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits&..)
(accessed 05-05-01)

MP calls for Bill on boxing 18-12-00 available from
[Http://news.thdo.bbc.co.uk/sport/hi/english/other_sport/newsid_1076000/1076750.stm](http://news.thdo.bbc.co.uk/sport/hi/english/other_sport/newsid_1076000/1076750.stm)
(accessed 03-05-01)

Is boxing a spent force? 18-12-00 available from
[Http://news.thdo.bbc.co.uk/sport/hi/english/other_sport/newsid_1076000/1076689.stm](http://news.thdo.bbc.co.uk/sport/hi/english/other_sport/newsid_1076000/1076689.stm)
(accessed 03-05-01)

Nurses reject call to ban boxing, Celia Hall 24-04-96 available from
[Http://telegraph.co.uk/et?ac=](http://telegraph.co.uk/et?ac=) (accessed 03-05-01)

It is legal GBH on a routine basis' Celia Hall 16-10-95 available from
[Http://telegraph.co.uk/et?ac=](http://telegraph.co.uk/et?ac=) (accessed 03-05-01)

Boxing; 2000 available from
[Http://ebooks.whsmithsonline.co.uk/](http://ebooks.whsmithsonline.co.uk/) (accessed 08-05-01)

Women's Boxing (unknown) available from
[Http://ladyboxer.co.uk/history1.htm](http://ladyboxer.co.uk/history1.htm) (accessed 30-04-01)

Early Boxing (unknown) available from
[Http://www.secondsout.com/story_6382.asp](http://www.secondsout.com/story_6382.asp) (accessed 09-05-01)

CD Roms:

Warden, B. 'Why we do not want fragile women boxing' accessed from The Daily Mail
CD Rom :13-02-98.

Blackstock, C. 'Women fight to win' accessed from The Independent on Sunday CD
Rom : 15-02-98.

Clement, B. 'PMT makes women 'unfit to box' accessed from The Independent CD Rom
: 13-02-98.